Women in Agriculture: 
Finding a path through Sustainable Ag

By Anne Borgendale

I graduated from college five years ago with a degree in chemistry and a minor in biology. Trained to be a “woman in science,” I often feel like a bit of a disappointment because I didn’t go on to graduate school or seek a professional degree related to the sciences. Many of my former college classmates who are female are now finishing these programs and have earned PhDs, are researchers, doctors, pharmacists and dentists. Some days, it can be discouraging to think that I’ve severely reduced my earning potential, let down my former professors, and let down my gender by not pursuing an advanced degree in science.

I should have seen it coming. Instead of pursuing college internships focused on the lab sciences, the Center for Small Towns at the University of Minnesota, Morris caught my eye, and I was hooked on internships related to agriculture and local foods. After graduating, it wasn’t too surprising that a job with the Sustainable Farming Association was more enticing to me more than working in a lab.

However, the longer I work in sustainable agriculture, the clearer it is to me that sustainable agriculture empowers women—especially rural women. And instead of joining my college classmates to become a “woman in science,” I chose to be a “woman in agriculture.” Traditionally, agriculture in the United States has been even more dominated by men than the sciences. The sustainable ag movement is changing this.

If you page through a conventional ag magazine, most of the pictures feature white men (sometimes with their sons), which seems somewhat out-of-touch considering that women and minorities have fought hard to possess equality in most professions. However, these photos do accurately represent the demographics of today’s conventional farmer.

This snapshot of agriculture begins to look quite different when you visit a Farm Beginnings® class, attend an SFA field day or conference, or observe the young people who approach SFA about Women in Agriculture continued on page 10
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Here is our fee schedule for CornerPost ads for the 2009-10 fiscal year:

- $500 full page
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We also are offering a classified ad section. Current SFA members will be invited to submit classifieds free of charge.

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Chapters are active in many interesting events year round. Call the chapter contact for more information, or visit our website at www.sfa-mn.org.

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Chapter Updates

Central Chapter

By Sue Peterson

During the course of the summer, Sustainable Farming Association of Central Minnesota (SFACM) had a number of member and non-member farm tours and a pruning and maintenance workshop for the 100 Orchards Project. The first tour took place at Mike Stine’s Stonebridge Beef farm in early June, with a nice turnout and a potluck lunch. Mike has a grass-fed beef operation using South Devon cattle and management intensive grazing.

In late June came the 100 Orchards Pruning and Maintenance workshop at Greg Nolan’s Snowy Pines Farm. Greg has a sawmill and a family orchard. He enjoyed hosting a small, but enthusiastic crowd. In July, a number of folks toured Steve Gilbertson’s Gilbe’s Orchard Farm. Steve raises organic apples and grass-fed cattle. Visitors enjoyed Steve’s 2000 young apple trees and many of his unique and cutting edge ideas on orcharding. The evening ended with a potluck dinner. In August, SFACM set up a tour at Kevin Happke’s Rolling Hills Nursery. Kevin has a working nursery and is developing a farm machinery museum. The crowd enjoyed a tour of his greenhouses and dripline irrigation systems, and especially, the amazing variety of antique farm machinery. Again, the evening ended with a potluck dinner.

The highlight of the summer, though, was definitely the Festival of Farms held on Saturday, September 12. Five farms in close proximity in the Long Prairie area held simultaneous farm tours. Tours included: two dairies, a pastured pork operation, a maple syrup operation, a farm selling home baked goods, another
selling western cedar outdoor furniture, a vegetable farm, and a grass fed beef operation. Visitors were sent to Mike Stine’s Stonebridge Beef Farm as a starting point, and then could go on any number of tours. A lunch featuring local food (Mike’s beef and Lawrence Fox’s pork, Rebecca Martin’s freshly baked buns, Snowy Pines’ cabbage salad and potatoes, and apples from Azariah Acres Farm) was served under a big tent on Mike’s farm. The project was partially underwritten by the Initiative Foundation and was well received by the local community. The farms had visits by approximately 100 people, and SFACM fed 50 under the tent. The weather was beautiful and the people were enthusiastic, which made for an extremely enjoyable day overall.

Upcoming events for the SFACM include:
- Solar Farm Tour at Snowy Pines on Saturday, October 3 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Please call either Greg Nolan (320 333-4056) or Sue Peterson (320 355-2980 or email azariahsue@yahoo.com) for directions and more details
- 100 Orchards Harvest Workshop at the HUG campus in Pine River on Saturday, October 24 from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Please contact Sue Peterson (320 355-2980 or email azariahsue@yahoo.com) for more information.

Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter

by Mary Ellen Frame

In our area, at least, we had to contend with drought this summer, starting in May and continuing through June and July. In August we had seemingly non-stop rain for a couple of weeks. And then it stopped. The soil is really dry again. This was also the coolest summer I can remember; tomatoes were very late ripening, and don’t have the usual flavor. Now, in September we’re finally getting summer! Let’s hope frost holds off for another week or two.

Our chapter has continued this year with monthly farm tours and potlucks, which are a great opportunity for us to see what others are doing, and to share the information about what works and possible solutions to problems. Our members represent a wide range of both animal and vegetable farming, so there’s something for
everyone.

In June we visited Mike and Linda Noble’s Farm on Wheels, near Kenyon. They raise cattle, sheep, pigs and all kinds of poultry, including layers. All of them are on grass. In fact, they said that when the ducks are done with the brooder, they don’t need grain any more; they fatten on grass and bugs. Nobles are trying out the “Freedom Rangers” breed of chickens which have better flavor than the Cornish Cross, are smarter, more active and forage better as free range birds, so the management is easier, though they take longer to mature. A darker meat goes along with the better flavor. Their layers are “Special Blacks” and “Gold Stars,” which have an instinct for foraging.

In July we went to Regi and Amy Haslett-Marroquin’s Finca Mirasol. Regi has organized a growers’ co-operative to raise broilers efficiently, while letting them range in large, outdoor pens. The plan is to enable Latino farmers to launch their own chicken-raising enterprises, replicating the system that’s being developed at Finca Mirasol. A large network of small operations is planned.

Some of our chapter members also went to the workshop sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project at Gardens of Eagan on Sunday, July 19, touring the farm on a hayrack with benches. It’s probably the biggest organic vegetable growing operation in Minnesota, supplying many of the co-ops. Their systems have been very well developed over the last thirty years, and they continue to make further refinements and innovations, dealing with weed, insects, diseases and weather, as we all do.

In August, it was Mike and Colleen Braucher’s Sunshine Harvest Farm that hosted us. They raise beef cattle, sheep and chickens, both broilers and layers. A really large difficulty that they have to deal with is not having enough land where they live, so they have to travel to manage the animals that are grazing on rented land.

Erin Johnson and Ben Doherty, at Open Hands Farm hosted the September tour. They have a vegetable CSA, which has over eighty member families, and a waiting list of more than sixty. They grow strawberries, raspberries, flowers and herbs as well as a great variety of vegetables. They start most seedlings in their greenhouse, and in the fall they extend the season with two hoop houses. Most of their crops did very well this year, especially alliums, though they were dependent on their tape irrigation system throughout the season.

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Crow River Chapter

By Greg Reynolds

The big event for us has been the Garlic Festival. It was an unmitigated success. We had a few reservations going in, the festival was in a new location, Hutchinson, this year and the weather forecast was for a 70% chance of rain were two big ones, but it went really well.

Garlic Festival got bumped by the Wright County Fair when they moved the fair back a week. If the festival was a week earlier, there was a chance that the garlic crop would not be ready. If we went the week after, we would be bumping up against the State Fair. Neither sounded like a good choice. And the Fair Board had pissed Jerry off time and time again. Moving the date was the last straw. A new location was the only option that would keep Jerry out of jail.

I don’t know who suggested Hutchinson, but it was brilliant. They must have had a tornado down there; all their facilities are new. And the place is huge. We could have put the entire 2008 festival into one of their middle-sized buildings. The staff is top notch. Randy, the fairgrounds manager met with us early, was always available to answer any questions, and was around during the festival to make sure things went smoothly. Everyone there was easy going and great to work with. I think that we have signed a two-year contract with them already. The kicker is that they charged us less for more than we were getting at Wright County.

Dennis Ingle brought in about 30% more vendors than last year. He also brought in more and better food vendors to compete with the Great ‘Scape Cafe. The food vendors were outside on the central lawn and under a pavilion in the middle of the fairgrounds. The Agribition Building was jammed full of garlic, art, crafts, more food, information, everything. The space was well laid out. It was busy without feeling crowded and never jammed up with too many people.

Most of the vendors had a good show. Garlic farmers ran out of garlic. Outside food vendors ran out of food. Dave and Florence Minar of Cedar Summit Dairy brought 30% more garlic ice cream this year and sold out even earlier than last year. The vendors really make the festival. Dennis’s plan to dominate the fundraising failed nonetheless.

Marienne Kreitlow put together a nice soundtrack for the festival. One of the things that we have learned is that this is a local food festival, not a local music festival like we first thought. There were a few rough spots this year. One band, The Bedwetters were all excited to be playing in front of 30 people and went long. When they came back for their second set, they upstaged the chef demo that was playing to a packed house. Rumor has it that they will not be back next year. Some performers got an unwelcome accompaniment from the chef demo crew banging around with pots and pans. I don’t think that will be happening again next year either.

Improvisation was the name of the game for the chef demos. The proposed kitchen never appeared. There was some last minute scrambling to get a workspace and an overhead mirror. Menards is open late and things worked out. Mary Jane Miller kept most of the cats heading the same way for the chef demos. Things were going pretty well until the first chef didn’t show up in time for his demo. Mary Jane drafted a replacement and all was well. The chef demos were all standing room only. They seem to be the big draw for the festival. When Alex Roberts demo-ed his pasta salad we had a little rush over at the cafe. People wanted pasta salad.

The Great ‘Scape Cafe was a success. I was kind of worried that we were going to take a bath. Everyone had to walk through all the other food vendors to find the cafe hidden behind a few trees with the entrance around the corner. There was never much of a line, but once we counted up the money we did better than last year. That’s what happens when I get out of the way and let professionals run things. They all did a great job getting things organized and working smooth. They seemed
As in past summers, the Lake Superior Chapter organized and/or co-sponsored a number of events and tours prior to our big annual event the first Saturday after Labor Day. Several of our members were involved in GrazeFest, which was held on July 17-18 in Carlton County. Our Urban Farm Tour, which includes a chance to see chicken coops in Duluth, was held on August 1. On August 2, Landis and Steven Spickerman hosted a well-attended tour at Hermit Creek Farm south of Ashland, WI, featuring a number of innovative and effective season extension methods. Farm Fest, a fundraiser for the 2008-2009 Lake Superior Farm Beginnings (LSFB) program, was held on August 29 at Chelsea Morning Farm north of Two Harbors, MN. A session on CSA’s was held prior to the festivities, which included a tour, a local foods potluck-style dinner featuring, Lake Superior herring, and children’s activities.

Following an unusually cool summer, our weather reversed course on Labor Day weekend and stayed above normal for a full three weeks, just in time for the 16th Annual Lake Superior Harvest Festival and Energy Fair. With more exhibitors, more vendors, a bigger farmers market, more educational workshops, and a big-name musical attraction, this year’s festival brought a number of changes. Most of the festival activities ended at 4:00 p.m., but headliner Greg Brown entertained the sizable crowd that remained in the evening. With the Duluth waterfront as a backdrop and the sun setting behind the hills that rise above Duluth, the concert was a memorable ending to a near perfect day for the crowds that turned out on yet another sunny, unseasonably warm day. The effects of charging admission, hosting a headline musical act in the evening, and selling a locally brewed beer in the evening will generate some lively discussion as we begin planning for our big event in 2010.

Members are now looking forward to completing the fall harvest and holding another successful fall fundraiser, Farmers Take the Stove. In August, we might have predicted a preponderance of root crops and cabbage as the main ingredients, but given the unexpected turn in September weather, there should also be plenty of winter squash at this potluck style event.

Garlic from Loon Organics, Hutchinson, MN.

Lake Superior Chapter

By Joel Rosen

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South Central Chapter

By Katy Wortel

The South Central Chapter held their annual picnic on Monday, August 10 at the Clarks Grove Golf Course. After a delicious potluck meal, people from six different local food operations in the South Central Chapter area shared information about what they are doing. Verlys Huntley, an organizer from the Albert Lea Farmers’ Market, talked about her many years of experience as a market gardener and fruit producer. Katy Wortel had information about the fall sales at her pumpkin patch and her experiences over many years as a market gardener. The group learned about Amy Holmgren’s recently established CSA operation and the efforts of Kelly Firkins and Pavel Buda to start a new market gardening operation. Heidi Thompson spoke about the work she and her husband are doing to produce and market organic meat and cater events cooking their own food. Jill Louters added information on the experiences she and her partners have had selling and producing organic vegetables and meat and their plan for marketing over the internet.

South Central Chapter member Dennis Lutteke and family held their third annual field day on Saturday, September 12 on their farm near Wells. Hundreds of people attended the event, which included speakers from Midwest BioAg on “Soil Nutrition for Organic Crop Production.” The Lutteke’s invited guests to look around their dairy farm. After a hearty homemade organic lunch, attendees viewed Lutteke’s corn test plots with over 40 varieties of corn, and watched as a number of different cultivating tools were demonstrated, including a flame weeder built by Dennis himself.

Chapter members were saddened by the news of the death of long time chapter member and supporter, Wally Dunn, on September 17 of cancer. Wally had just turned 80 years old. He had many friends and was well known for his good humor and positive attitude. Wally was a strong supporter of sustainable farming, who often told stories about the sustainable farming practices that he grew up with and learned from his father. He was devoted to his family and helped his daughter, Lisa; take over the operation of the family farm. Wally and his wife, Janet Stadhiem, were gracious hosts of several chapter potlucks. At the last board meeting that Wally attended, he told us that we were doing important work and should stick together and continue this work. We give thanks for the wonderful life of a wonderful friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with Wally’s family.
Minnesota Dairy Labor Development Project

By Jeremy Lanctot

The economic downturn has affected nearly every industry and family recently. The dairy industry has seen its own ups and downs. For the most part, the latest economic struggles have been very stressful for dairy families. It’s been drought, floods, high petroleum costs driving high input costs, low raw milk prices coupled with reduced dairy demand from high store shelf prices and a host of miscellaneous strains and pressures have made dairy farming a hard way of life. Long hours without days off coupled with increasingly stringent milk quality goals and environmental regulations have pushed many producers to “throw in the towel.” Why keep fighting a seemingly hopeless up-hill battle to be sustainable.

Even with these daunting enemies of profitability, some enterprising individuals are thinking outside the box about alternate methods of producing milk. The interest in low-input dairy farming is increasing. Just read books by people, such as, Joel Salatin and Greg Judy who have built profitable grazing operations for beef cows. In Graze Magazine or Stockman Grass Farmer read about people in all aspects of grazing who are developing new methods of producing meat and dairy. Just because most people are doing business a certain way doesn’t mean that is the best for everyone. We have to be flexible in our approaches.

One aspect of dairy farming that has been a problem for many farms is skilled labor. Yes, there is unskilled labor where most anyone can drive up to your farm and be put to work doing any number of mundane tasks. We’re speaking of something that requires a little more observation and skill. Have you ever wanted to take a few days or weeks off for a vacation and not been able to leave the farm with anyone competent? This has been an ongoing problem that is being worked on by the Minnesota Dairy Labor Development Project (MDLDP).

The MDLDP was born out of a steering committee meeting I had with several dairy producers a few years ago. Once we got talking, the ideas started rolling out and we decided to see if we could make reality out of it. It is still in its infancy stage, but the ball is rolling along and our baby steps are becoming steadier.

This past summer, a survey was completed by the University of Minnesota, Morris’ Center for Small Towns (CST, www.centerforsmalltowns.org). If studied dairy labor on Minnesota dairy farms. I would like to quickly summarize the findings and the direction of the new MDLDP.

CST mailed a detailed survey questionnaire to a representable sample of nearly 500 Minnesota dairy farms from 53 counties who are members of the Minnesota Milk Producers Association. (A big “Thank You!” to MMPA for partnering with us on this survey.) From the returned responses, the following information was ascertained:

- The average number of years spent in dairy production is about 31 years.
- The average amount of time participants plan to remain in dairy is about 12 years.
- The responses suggest a focus on the family • continuing to operate the dairy operation.
- The average herd size 5 years ago was 113 and the present average is almost 150.
- Tie-stall, Free-stall and compost bedded housing are the most common types, respectively.
- The top skills needed are Milking, Equipment Operation, Calf-Feeding and Handling/Sorting.
- About 75% have paid employees with an average number of 4.87 employees.
- The average expected pay to employees is about $11 per hour.

For those who would like to own a dairy farm someday, starting at the top is very expensive. Starting as MDI continued on page 10
MDI continued from page 9

an employee provides a way to work your way into a farm over years. You might average $11 per hour now, but the sky is the limit for income once you have your own herd and eventually a farm. Start small. Borrowing your way to success is often the road to rags, not riches. Get a lot of mentoring help from successful farmers. We can help you find them.

From the farm owner perspective, we received a lot of comments along with the canned fill-in responses. A common theme was there is no pool of workers to pull from and sorting through people is a big job. Sometimes what dairy farm managers want is a robot that doesn’t cost anything, but most times they understand that workers have needs as well. Sometimes the responses were pessimistic or even cynical. Kind of like, “Yeh, sure, good help...tell me about it.”

Over the summer, MDLDP has setup a website (www.mndairylabor.com) to provide some baseline information for workers and managers of dairy farms. There is contact information there for those interested in finding a farm to work on and for managers looking for workers. A primary goal of this project is to train both the workers and farmers to provide a better working experience for both parties. This can be accomplished by employing existing classes, workshops and seminars put on by local education institutions like the University of Minnesota – Extension (www.extension.umn.edu/dairy), Ridgewater College Dairy Program (www.ridgewater.edu/programs/dairymanagement and Farm Business Management (www.mgt.org) and especially local on-farm visits through your local SFA chapter. Be sure to watch the www.sfa-mn.org site and the bi-weekly emails for this info.

If you’re a farmer looking for temporary or permanent help then we may be able to help. If you’re a farm that can host interns for several weeks or months, we’d love to hear from you so we can forward interns your way. Several schools and organizations are looking for homes for their students for short-term farming experiences. One never knows – one of these interns may become your future farm transfer recipient. Many dairy farms do not have a targeted transferee for their business.

If you’re a farm worker, we can help you develop a resume and find farms to work on. If you’d like to grow into a permanent situation, we will help steer you towards schooling/work options that will help you accomplish your goals. We would also like to help you find farms that need someone to transfer into. The average age of farm managers and owners is creeping upwards. Many need options of people who would be willing to look at taking over their operation someday. Why not start now.

Contact Chris Barnier at 320-632-4691 or Jeremy Lanctot at 320-980-2333 if you are interested in any aspect of dairy labor.

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internships. There is a healthy mix of both men and women who are pursuing opportunities in sustainable agriculture. This group also more accurately reflects the roles women play in the world in 2009–women aren’t just silent farm wives in sustainable ag; instead, they are often the farmer or an equal farm partner. These are intelligent, skillful women who realize that you can still have a successful career without climbing the ladder at a big corporation or following a more traditional career path. Instead, they see that their education and abilities can be put to good use on the farm or working with farmers.

This isn’t always an easy path to follow, for men or for women. When you are the farmer, there isn’t a glass ceiling to break, but you must deal with the looks and comments from more conventional neighbors, being turned down for a loan by an uncooperative banker, or feeling isolated or disconnected because you are not engaged in a mainstream profession. For women, farming can also pose some of the same problems with work-life balance as any other job—instance, maternity leave can be an issue when there are cows that need to be milked several times a day.

Fortunately, there are many pioneering role models in the generation that came before me, along with more and more women from my own generation. They are farmers and leaders in agriculture, community and environmental groups. They remind us that women’s voices, abilities and leadership are valuable and needed. It is these women who help me be at peace with my decision to forgo the road of the scientist, and instead embrace the challenging and rewarding path blazed open for me as a young woman in sustainable agriculture.

With editorial assistance from Laura Borgendale.
4TH ANNUAL MINNESOTA GARLIC FESTIVAL A STINKING SUCCESS

By Jerry Ford

8:00 a.m., Saturday, August 15, and the radio is predicting rain. But for the present, scattered clouds, a cool breeze and light dew welcome the dozens of volunteers, vendors, chefs, performers and stagehands scurrying about in chaotically choreographed preparations for the 10:00 a.m. opening of the 4th annual Minnesota Garlic Festival.

One of the busiest is Vendor Coordinator and SFA Board Director, Dennis Ingle, calm in the midst of a scene that would remind many farmers of the day the goat herd got out. “Yes, you can take one more foot of space in front of your booth”, “No, we never got a Vendor Application from you, but I’ll find you a spot,” “Could you please move that trailer right away?”

By 9:00 a.m., enticing aromas waft from The Great Scape Cafe, the festival’s own restaurant, managed by organic vegetable guru, Greg Reynolds, who has convened a cadre of top Minnesota chefs to cook for the day. Meanwhile, Chef Wrangler, Mary Jane Miller, and her hyperfoodie crew are assembling a demonstration kitchen on half of the Wedge Co-op Local Foods/Local Arts Stage; while on stage right, where the entertainment acts perform, the battle cry of the sound test (“Check, one, two”) rings out through the PA.

8:45 a.m.: the boy scouts are directing traffic, local dignitaries are set for the opening ceremony at the admissions tent, the Light of the Moon Band entertains the early birds, and a line of patrons forms.

10:00 a.m.: Officials from McLeod County and City of Hutchinson welcome the waiting crowd, an intern hands them each a Minnesota grown garlic bulb, and they get set for the “first pitch”. Festival Director, Jerry Ford, and Garlic Committee Chair, Irene Bender, are ready - chefs hats in hand - to catch the bulbs. A hush falls on the crowd, the bulbs fly true to their targets, and to the cry of “Let The Stinking Begin!”, the Water Carnival Royalty cut the ribbon and the festival is open!

Throughout the morning, festival goers were treated to fine locally produced foods, tantalizing cooking demonstrations, enticing entertainment and farm and art products from across the state. A popular feature of the festival is the “Ask The Expert” tent, managed by McLeod/Meeker County Extension agent Nathan Winter, where authorities on garlic growing, winter greenhouses, essential oils, maple syrup, vegetable sales and wholistic pest control addressed packed audiences.

This year saw a record number of garlic growers selling their crops: thirteen farms were represented, eleven hailing from Minnesota, one from South Dakota and one from Wisconsin. All reported good yields this Garlic Festival continued on page 12

Dave Minar of Cedar Summit Dairy demonstrating that garlic ice cream is good to the last lick.
Garlic Festival continued from page 11 year, though harvest was late, and the growers were curing garlic right up to the festival.

New to the revels this year was the Peculiar Pragmatic Promenade, a quirky parade that drew in members of the crowd who didn’t even know they were promenaders or pragmatic, let alone peculiar, joining the dancers, bagpipers, samba players and costumed characters.

Crow River Chapter member Cathy Rose assembled a host of activities for the kids – though a remarkable number of adults joined in – including old time picnic games and playing in “The Culinary Orchestra” with folk music legend Charlie Maguire. SFA’s art intern, Karen Kudrna, not only organized the Youth Art Competition (see article), but also supervised the kite building feature. By 4:00 p.m., 150 kites had been built. Much of the time, the sky above the south end of the festival grounds was filled with these wind powered aircraft.

But all those kites landed by 3:00 p.m., when the rains and thunder moved in. Undaunted, the patrons simply moved inside the festival’s new digs at McLeod County Fairgrounds, either in the Great Scape Cafe, the spacious Agribition Building, the open air pavilion, or our new performance tent: The Wedge Natural Foods Co-op Local Foods/Local Arts Stage.

When it was all said and done, over 2,300 people enjoyed the festival. Even with the prediction and actuality of rain, this was a 15% increase over 2008, thanks to the greatly appreciated promotional support from Minnesota Grown, who secured several TV spots, and the relentless efforts of the Crow River Chapter and the Garlic Festival Committee.

Set aside the date for the 5th Annual Minnesota Garlic Festival: August 14, 2010, at McLeod County Fairgrounds in Hutchinson, and “Let the Stinking Continue”!

SFA has been nominated for the 2009 Local Hero Award!

Local Heros are those people and organizations that Edible Twin Cities Magazine readers feel have made a significant contribution to our local food community. Please go to the Edible Twin Cities website and cast your vote at: www.edibletwincities.net

The Light of the Moon Band performing at the Garlic Festival’s opening ceremony.

Winners will be announced in the spring edition of the Edible Twin Cities Magazine.
What’s art got to do with it?

It was a long shot. Back in 2007, former SFA Executive Director, Mary Jo Forbord, and the Board Director from Crow River Chapter, Jerry Ford, wrote a section in an application for a major Bush Foundation grant that would fund using art to teach young people about sustainable agriculture by creating an internship that would manage and oversee a Youth Sustainability Art Competition. In an effort to find a way to bring more young people into the field, Forbord and Ford looked at the characteristics of successful sustainable farmers and realized that they are inherently creative people – have you ever noticed how many of them are artists, musicians and writers? This same grant would also create the GrazeFest Internship, the Events & Youth Outreach Coordinator position, the Youth Sustainability Writing Competition, and a series of events for young people.

What sounded like a long shot at first - using the arts to connect young people with sustainable farming – started to make sense. It made sense to the Bush Foundation as well, who awarded SFA with a three-year grant.

This summer was the second year for the Arts Internship, in which a college student develops and directs a series of after-school workshops for kids, culminating in an exhibit and competition at Minnesota Garlic Festival. Karen Kudrna, a College of St. Benedict Environmental Studies major, accepted the internship in the Spring and dived headlong into planning workshops and art projects.

“The major part of my job was to educate kids through art and I think I succeeded”, Kudrna wrote in her final essay, “I cannot say that every child learned something crucial, but nearly all of them got an idea of what I was trying to get across. The future is something they can imagine and create, and to have a good future they need to try to live in harmony, and do little harm to nature.”

By mid-August, Karen taught eleven separate workshops in venues as disparate as Farmers Union Camps, farmers markets, county fairs, community education, and GrazeFest. 170 kids participated, 101 entries were submitted to the art competition, and Karen put over 1,600 miles on her car traversing the state.

Jerry Ford, who became SFA’s Events & Youth Outreach Coordinator, considers this a resounding success, as does Karen. “They might not remember what a renewable resource is,” she wrote, “but they might remember that some farmers will buy ladybugs instead of pesticides. And as they grow up, they can build upon that fact by relearning why pesticides and other chemicals are harmful. They will hopefully remember what sustainable means, or at least remember that it is a positive idea. If nothing else, I hope they had fun with an art project that was not harmful to the environment.”

SFA approaches internships as not only a way to get some work out of enthusiastic young people, but also to provide that person with an opportunity to learn about our mission and further their own goals. Kudrna says it well: “As an Environmental Studies major, I got along with everyone I interacted with through the Sustainable Farming Association. It was relaxing and fun to be around people who cared about the same things I did, and I did not have to always be the one to remember to turn the lights off and not leave the water running. It was made clear to me that whatever career I choose, I will want to find people who have a focus on the protecting and preserving the environment.”
**SFA mourns the loss of Vic Ormsby, a long-time friend and advocate of sustainable farming**

By Jim Riddle

Victor (Vic) Joseph Ormsby died peacefully in his sleep, shortly after midnight on September 10, 2009.

Vic was born September 4, 1941, in Denver, CO, to Arthur and Helen (Majors) Ormsby. He is preceded in death by his parents.

Vic is survived by his wife, Sharon (Keefe) Ormsby, Winona; son Peter (Angie) Ormsby and their sons Alex, Drew, and Matthew, Plymouth, MN; and daughter Rebecca (Michael) Charles, and their sons Sam and Nate, Robbinsdale, MN. He is also survived by his five brothers and seven sisters, their spouses, and many nieces and nephews.

Diagnosed with cancer in 2007, Vic spent the last few years doing what he loved – spending quality time with family and friends, gardening, kayaking, cooking, and working to protect land and water resources.

Vic graduated from high school in Huron, SD, after briefly attending an Indian Mission School and a Catholic Prep School. He graduated from St. Mary’s University in Winona, where he met Sharon Keefe, who was a nursing student at St. Theresa’s. Vic and Sharon were married in September 1965.

Vic received an M.S. in Guidance and Counseling from Illinois State University in Normal, IL. He continued his studies in Education Measurement and Statistics at the University of Iowa, before working for American College Testing.

Vic and Sharon moved to Minnesota in 1973, when Vic began teaching Research Methods at St. Theresa’s Rochester campus, where he taught a course called “Facilitating Change,” helping nursing students become agents for change.

Vic was a founding member of the Wiscon Valley Community Land Cooperative and helped establish the coop’s legal structure, the first of its kind in Minnesota. Throughout his life, Vic was committed to building community. He helped establish Famine Foods (now Bluff Country Coop) and Prairie Moon Nursery.

Vic was elected Winona County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor in 1996. In this capacity, Vic served on the Hiawatha RC&D board, and was appointed by Gov. Jesse Ventura to the Board of Water and Soil Resources from 2001-2005. Vic helped establish the Driftless Area Initiative and was on the board of the Basin Alliance for the Lower Mississippi in Minnesota.

Vic was a long-standing member of the Land Stewardship Project. Vic served as Vice President of the MN chapter of the Organic Crop Improvement Association and was chair of the Sustainable Farming Association’s Southeast MN chapter. Vic sold organic produce at the Winona Farmers Market from 1993-2003, and supported the farmers market throughout his life.

Vic served on the Winona County Planning Commission and the Winona County Economic Development Authority. Vic received the EDA’s 2009 Local Food Hero Award.

Vic was active in the Bluff Land Environmental Watch, Mississippi River Revival, Winona Area Peacemakers, and MN Green Party. He was an official water quality monitor for MPCA, and a strong supporter of the Winona Catholic Worker House and Women’s

Vic Ormsby continued on page 26
Conversations with the Land:  
REAL CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

by Jim VanDerPol

This article originally appeared in Graze magazine. You can get a sample copy of Graze at: PO Box 48, Belleville, WI 53508; graze@ticon.net, (608) 455-311.

Consider these words from Time magazine’s August 31, 2009 article entitled “The Real Cost of Cheap Food”:
“A transition to more sustainable, smaller-scale production methods. . . .would require far more farm workers than we have today. With unemployment approaching double digits—and things especially grim in impoverished rural areas that have seen populations collapse over the past several decades—that’s hardly a bad thing.”

Pause for a moment now and let that sink in. Time is a center-right publication, it is in no sense a left wing journal. Did you ever think you would read words like that in the conventional press? Surely the statement itself sounds pretty commonsensical to us but that is because we are rural people and have actually been thinking these thoughts for some time. Time is not rural. Bryan Walsh, the journalist who wrote this is an urban upwardly mobile professional type. Urban folks have supposedly had the advantages offered by the takeover of agriculture by technology and high finance.

This only thing that would make these words more startling is if they had been spoken by an agricultural economist. Then it would have been the equivalent of swearing in church, for in the world of economics you never, ever say that more people involved in productive work is a good thing. Remember that the favorite construct of the economist is that bit about how many people each farmer feeds, which goes up every year, while the farmers actually doing the “feeding” are left to wonder where all the people went.

It is not only that agricultural economists condemn rural people to this kind of treadmill to disaster, but that economists as a whole cheerlead for a future where nobody works making anything and everybody is instead a customer or consumer. That is why labor unions are so hard to get along with these days, for they are made up of ordinary people smart enough to see the future being planned and know that it can’t work. The whole economics profession, on the other hand, is delusional. And conventional agriculture, which has benefited big time from that delusion is livid with anger over the appearance of this article, to no one’s surprise.

Maybe there is hope if a piece like this can appear in the conventional press. The paragraph quoted ends with this from Nicolette Hahn-Niman, attorney and wife of Bill Niman, founder of Niman Ranch: “We are hurting for job creation and industrial farming has pushed people off the farm. We need to make farming real employment, because if you do it right, it’s enjoyable work.” The truth, of course, is that no one needs to make farming real employment, for it already is. It is just not properly paid.

It would help, as we wrestle with these things, if Washington D.C. were not full of bought and paid for hacks, if there instead were some real statesmen and women down there. Surely you have noticed, for example, that we have been coping with our current economic calamity (real unemployment near 17 or 18 percent is a calamity in any one’s calculations, and dangerous to boot) mainly by writing out big checks to Wall Street criminal types. We “fixed” the problems in the auto industry by guaranteeing profitability for GM and Chrysler, who promptly responded by moving more factories to Mexico. Nobody in Washington evidently ever thought that we should take the same money and instead employ folks discarded by the auto industry in various jobs fixing American infrastructure while letting the companies sink or swim as the case might be. That would have brought unemployment down and infused money into the real economy of food, utilities, clothes and so forth.

This will not happen, of course. But the hope is that we no longer quite as much on our own as we have always been. There are other folks dissatisfied with agriculture as it is and thinking about what needs to happen. Michael Pollan springs to mind with the publication of “The Omnivore’s Dilemma” and Eric Schlosser’s “Fast Food Nation”, as does the documentary movie “Food, Inc.” The Time article is short on practical workable ideas for how we get there from here, as things

Conversations with the Land continued on page 16
SFA of MN State Board Update

By Mary Hanks, SFA Board Secretary and Chair of Nominating Committee

State board members, most of them being farmers, have focused their attention to summer farm chores and activities like many of you. The priority focus of the board has been the selection of a new Executive Director. The Nominating Committee with assistance from the Executive Committee wrote a position description and publicized the job notice, requesting applications by August 10. We received 37 applications! We were truly impressed with the qualifications of the applicants and the enthusiasm and passion for sustainable agriculture and local foods that many wrote about in their cover letters. After careful review and discussion, six applicants were selected for interviews, most of them scheduled for September 24. The intention is to make a decision and hire the new Executive Director in October to allow some time for orientation before the November board meeting. I’d like to thank the board members involved in this very important process: Chris Barnier, Dennis Ingle, Chris Kudrna, John Ostgarden, and John Sluss. If you would like more information or have comments about the search, please contact me or one of the committee members.

You never really know how much you relied on someone until they are no longer there, and that has been the case with the resignation of Mary Jo Forbord as Executive Director. The Executive Committee has stepped up to act in the role of the Executive Director since June, communicating with and guiding project contractors and making the decisions that go with the day-to-day tasks of the organization. Our communications, dairy development, and events coordinators have taken on additional responsibilities to fill in until the new Executive Director is on board. Thank you Anne Borgendale, Jeremy Lancot, and Jerry Ford. The board would like to take this opportunity to again thank Mary Jo for her commitment and hard work for SFA, to wish her well in her current and future endeavors, and to say that we look forward to working with her in the future.

The next state board meeting is scheduled for November 13 in St. Cloud. Among the items on the agenda is the annual conference, which will be held again at St. Olaf College in Northfield. Watch for more details!

Conversations with the Land continued from page 15 like this always are. But it recognizes the problem, which is a start. And the hope would be that if the people who buy our food are starting to see some of the series of shortcuts that go into making what should be good food dangerous for the health of those who eat it and for us farmers, our communities and the earth itself, there will be a few customers and then a few more that will help us on our way as we try to make some changes.

As for us and our farm and business, it is very much based upon the sorts of people who notice and are willing to go some distance out of their way to help make change happen. For that we are grateful. May their numbers grow. Much of the hope centers upon us that are involved in alternative means of production and the growth of local food systems. It is up to us to make sure that we include consideration for the need of more human hands on our farms and in our businesses in every capital decision that we make. Should it be the new building, new feeding system, bigger truck, or can another full or part-time worker achieve some of the same ends? Employment is a serious matter and not to be taken on lightly or to achieve a political goal. But we need to think again that perhaps what we need now more than ever is the neighbor discarded so easily and lightly over the last several generations, either as an employee or perhaps as contractee or partner. It is certain that we need our own young people with us and the times have never been less optimistic for wage work off the farm. These young need to be treated right and then expectations placed on them. Nothing changes if people are not willing to consider change. The Time article is a good sign that real change is possible. Human minds, both in the cities and in the rural areas, are ready to accept it.
Joel Rosen honored with Farmer’s Voice Award

By Anne Borgendale

“When I was younger, I thought that maybe I would do something dramatic to change the world. However, as I matured I came to believe that if everyone would just do his or her part in making the world a better place, it just might happen. This is the guiding principle I try to follow in farming, in personal relations, in politics, and in my involvement with SFA of MN.”

- Joel Rosen

The Farmer’s Voice Award “honors persons for ongoing and tireless dedication to farming, helping farmers have a voice, for showing an understanding of how farming benefits both farmers and consumers and for living the ideals and values embodied by sustainability.” Over the past six years the Lake Superior Chapter of SFA has honored several different farmers with this award. All honorees have embodied the ideals outlined above, but they all approached sustainable farming in their own way with a unique background and perspective. The 2009 Farmer’s Voice Award honoree, Joel Rosen, approached his service to SFA and to sustainable farming as just doing his part. However, he has made quite an impact for the members and citizens of the Lake Superior Chapter area.

For someone who says he has a history of “not lasting at things for a number of years,” this does not ring true for his farming career or tenure with SFA. Joel ran a farm near Mahtowa, MN in Carlton County for 21 years and has been involved with SFA for 18 years and counting.

Joel’s involvement with SFA began in 1991 before there was even officially a Northeast Chapter (which is now called the Lake Superior Chapter). For the first 15 years, he was chapter president, and served on the board for another three years after that. He then served as the chapter coordinator for eight months. Since February of this year he now holds the title of volunteer, but other Lake Superior Chapter members have named him “Board Member Emeritus.” Joel has also served on the SFA state board for 15 years. He is still technically on the board, but will be graciously handing off the baton in few months. While on the state board, he served as vice chair for 11 years and as board chair for a year following that. He is truly a walking encyclopedia of the history and happenings of SFA.

Joel didn’t grow up on a farm and followed a roundabout path to farming. He explained, “I went to college not really having any idea of what I wanted to do and ended up dropping out after a short time and ended up spending a few years knocking around the country. I started to realize I like spending a lot of time outdoors. I ended up working on different kinds of farms in different parts of the U.S. It began to look like something that I might want to do someday.” On his sojourn around the country, he worked on farms ranging from a very large grain and sugar beet farm near the North Dakota border to a tobacco farm in Kentucky to picking fruits and vegetables.

After his travels, he did return to school at Carleton College in Northfield, MN, and then became a high school English and journalism teacher in Koochiching County on the Canadian border. After six years of teaching, he felt it was time for a change, while his wife...
Joel Rosen continued from page 17

decided to return to school for veterinary medicine. They always had a big garden and some small livestock, but Joel wasn’t making his livelihood farming yet. This soon changed. Joel commented, “When she (my wife) graduated it suddenly became more realistic. We bought a place near where she took a job and it happened more gradually.” The farm was next to Park Lake, and Park Lake Farm was born.

The farm operation had three different phases. For the first three years, Park Lake Farm was small scale. Joel stated, “I planted this big garden and I thought we’ll have some chickens, some turkeys and some sheep, and make maple syrup.” His marketing plan was still evolving as well. He continued, “I had become a member of the food co-op in Duluth and started selling to them low volume at first, on consignment. Then I started at the farmers’ market as well.” Things rapidly changed after the third year. Joel cleared some land and increased the size of all of his farm operations, and it became an intense full-time operation. This phase lasted for eight years and included picking help in addition to a full-time employee. Joel scaled back so he could pretty much do everything on the farm himself. He reduced the size of the market garden, increased specialty crops and increased the number of greenhouses. He explains, “I made a shift that would let me spend a little less time total and not have to manage other people.”

However, as his farm changed over the years Joel always followed a couple of guiding principles: to increase the wildlife on his farm and to produce quality food. He commented, “It was important for me to do good things for the land. I’ve always been happy that my farm has a wide variety of wildlife, both large and small. As I went on with farming I found that certain weeds that farmers are encouraged to get rid of are actually havens for certain wildlife and bees.” He continued, “When we started out in the 1980s, organic farming didn’t have a very good image with a lot of people…the product often sat on the shelf too long and didn’t look good. I was going to produce food that not only tasted better than conventionally produced food, but also looked better as well. That is something that I tried to never lose sight of. I had very rigid standards about quality. Food is very important to me–that’s partly how I got into this–and I’m kind of fussy. If I didn’t think it was good enough to eat, I wouldn’t sell it to someone else.”

For the past two years, Joel has been officially retired from farming and his wife sold her veterinary practice this summer, but that doesn’t mean he’s ready to sit back in his rocker. He still has a large garden for his family’s consumption, is planning on traveling with his wife and is still active in SFA. He also is thinking of building a cord house on some land near Tofte, MN, cooking the food he grows, playing music and finally having a chance to fish more.

Joel feels that the future is bright for the Lake Superior Chapter of SFA. He commented, “The number of young people who have become interested (in sustainable farming) has skyrocketed in the last few years. That is very encouraging…if we would have talked about this 10 years ago I probably would have said ‘Where are the younger people going to come from to do some of this stuff–and now I’m seeing them.’ That is a terrific future for people to carry on.”

He also has a couple of areas in particular that he wants to work on with the Lake Superior Chapter. One involves local foods and restaurants. “I would like to work a little more as a liaison between growers and local area restaurants,” he stated. Joel continued, “There is tremendous tourism industry in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. There are all of these restaurants that want local foods and we don’t quite have the producers that have that orientation. I would like to help develop that because there is a lot of potential there.” The other area he would like to focus his energy involves revitalizing some of the dairy farms in the region. Joel explained, “This is an area that concerns me for the Lake Superior Chapter. We have a little less of a livestock component in our active membership than we did in the first 10 years. We have a lot of land that is very suitable for fruit and vegetable production and we also have a lot of land that is suitable for grazing and not so much else. Formerly, many counties were primarily dairy farms. I really feel that is an area where we are kind of missing out a bit. We should have more membership involved with revitalizing some of these former dairy farms and getting the grazing programs going. That is the other pet project I want to work on as well.”

Thus, in retirement Joel will continue to play a leadership role in sustainable agriculture in the Lake Superior Chapter. He is very honored to have been presented with the Farmer’s Voice Award, though he stated, “I’m pretty young to get this award.” He is happy to know that everyone doesn’t think he’s given up by retiring from active farming. It’s just a new phase in his life that will provide him with new ways to raise his voice in advocating for sustainable farming.
Sustainable Farming 101

By Hanna Schutte, St. Peter, MN
SFA's Youth Sustainability Writing Competition, College Division - Journalism

When I came from Iowa to Minnesota to go to school at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, all my friends wondered what had caused this motivation. “You know all they do up there is go fishing and watch hockey, right?” I came to learn, however, that there are many things Minnesota and Iowa have in common, including agriculture.

I grew up on a farm in the Northeast corner of Iowa, where conservation practices have really taken hold due to the hilly landscape. As I was driving back and forth between my home and St. Peter, I noticed how much flatter the area of Minnesota was, and the large amount of tilling that was done in comparison to where I was from. It made me curious; how did conservation practice differ from Minnesota to Iowa?

I began my quest by contacting the SWCD of Nicollet County. According to Kevin Ostermann, District Manager of the Nicollet County SWCD, there has been “an increase in buffers along streams, ditch systems and sensitive area controlled drainage projects”. This is similar to the practices found in Northeast Iowa, with an emphasis on preventing runoff and sustaining topsoil.

Ostermann mentioned some other similarities between Iowa and Minnesota, including an increase in pest and nutrient management practices; a reduction in dairy farmers, leading to a loss of alfalfa acres and more corn and soybean production; an increase in pest and nutrient management practices; and finally, an increase in corn on corn acres.

An increased demand for corn production has lead to this increase in corn on corn acres, as well as an increase in mold board plowing, throughout Nicollet county. “The increase has caused more soil erosion to occur, with this the sediment, which carries your nutrients and causes water quality issues,” said Ostermann.

There are a variety of programs available for farmers who choose to use conservation techniques, including the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA), to name a few.

Through learning about some of these programs and implementing their techniques, farmers can make a big difference in the world of sustainable agriculture.

After learning about some of the conservation techniques used for row crops, I was also interested in learning about organic agriculture in the area. It has recently begun to take hold in Northeast Iowa—was there much of demand for it in Minnesota?

I went down to the St. Peter Food Coop to find out more about organic farming. I discovered that interest in St. Peter for organic food is also beginning to pick up. With about 10 growers, the Coop is able to provide locally grown produce, cultivated using natural and acceptable pesticides and fertilizers, such as ground-up seashells. Growers range from grandparents to their grandchildren, helping in the garden.

There are benefits to selecting locally grown organic produce besides the sustainable farming aspect. “You get a higher quality product when it doesn’t have to travel as far,” said Produce Manager, Erik Larson. “Plus, there is the economic side of things. When you have the same product sitting side-by-side on the shelf for the same price, selecting the locally grown product will benefit local farmers and the local community.”

Through my research, I learned a lot about sustainable agriculture here in southern Minnesota. It is a different region, so there are obviously different techniques being used, but it was fascinating to catch a glimpse into what is being done to keep Minnesota farmland in the best condition possible. Both Ostermann and Larson mentioned that education is the best way to get the public interested in implementing conservation techniques on their own farm, or to show them the benefits of selecting locally grown produce. Perhaps this piece has provided you with some introductory education about southern Minnesota sustainable agriculture.
Mark your calendars for...

**The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota’s**
19\textsuperscript{th} **Annual Conference**

*Saturday, February 20, 2010 • St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN*

Is your organization, business or farm interested in being a conference sponsor? *Check out the form on page 21*

Is there a farmer or supporter of sustainable agriculture who you think should be recognized? Nominate them for either the Sustainable Farmer Emeritus Award or SFA’s Distinguished Service Award. *Check out the form on page 23*

For more details about the conference content, registration and more visit [WWW.SFA-MN.ORG](http://www.sfa-mn.org) as this conference information is finalized!

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**Edgerton, Minnesota**

Wind rattles the grass as rocks are coated in sweat.
Summer, prairie, life.

*By Sarah Bhimani, Corcoran, MN*
*SFA’s Youth Sustainability Writing Competition, College Division - Haiku winner*
Please consider participating as a:

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Assist SFA in a most significant way by selecting the Gold, Silver or Bronze sponsorship level on the accompanying registration form. Sponsors will be featured in publicity and promotional materials, and in the SFA conference program, distributed to all conference attendees. All sponsor levels include an exhibit space, publicity and complimentary conference registrations.

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Display and promote your mission, message, products and information, and interact with the most innovative farmers and sustainable agriculture ‘movers and shakers’ in Minnesota. The exhibit set up time runs 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. on the day of the conference; exhibits can be taken down after 5:00 p.m. Exhibit spaces will be assigned. The exhibit space is a 6-ft table without a table cloth or skirting. One chair will be provided per exhibit.

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*About the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota:*

We are a statewide non-profit educational organization of farmers and others committed to the ecologically sound and profitable production of a diverse array of healthy foods, renewable energy and natural fiber. Wisdom, experience and values guide us toward farming methods that support local and regional food systems, diversified and decentralized production, community health and prosperity, and a high quality of life for generations to come.

**Our Mission:** The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota supports the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking.
**Sponsorship & Exhibitor Form**

Save time and postage by completing this form online and transferring funds electronically through SFA’s website at [www.sfa-mn.org](http://www.sfa-mn.org). The online form will be available starting November 1, 2009.

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**Total Enclosed:**

**The farmers’ market is for current Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota farmer members**

Name(s) of attendees:

1) ____________________________________ 2) ____________________________________

3) ____________________________________ 4) ____________________________________

For Gold, Silver and Bronze Sponsors, will you have an exhibit? □ Yes □ No

Does your exhibit require electricity? □ Yes □ No

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The information below will be used to contact you about conference details and will be printed in the conference program as organizational contact information.

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For more info about Sponsor and Exhibitor opportunities contact Anne with SFA at (320) 226-6318 or communications@sfa-mn.org. Please either complete this form and submit payment online or mail this form and payment by Friday, January 29, 2010 to: SFA of MN (c/o Chris Barnier, SFA Treasurer), 7356 Cable Road, Little Falls, MN 56345-5433

Thank you for your support of sustainable agriculture in Minnesota!
2010 Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota Awards Nomination Form

Based on qualifications of a high level of dedication, commitment, service, perseverance, achievement, and contributions to the advancement of Sustainable Farming in Minnesota, I nominate the following person(s) for the:

(choose one):

___ Sustainable Farmer Emeritus Award (farmer or retired farmer only)

___ SFA Distinguished Service Award (may be a non-farmer)

To be announced at the 2010 SFA Annual Conference on Saturday, February 20, 2010 at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN.

Name: ___________________________________________________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: ____________________________ Email: ____________________________

Please write a brief rationale of why your nominee(s) deserves the Farmer Emeritus Award or the Distinguished Service Award:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Your signature: _________________________________________________________________

Mail your nomination form by Friday, January 29, 2010 to: SFA of MN, c/o Mary Hanks, 10500 295th St W, Northfield, MN 55057 or submit your form electronically to: Mary.Hanks@state.mn.us or post your nomination on the SFA of MN web site discussion board: www.sfa-mn.org/discussion.

Become a CornerPost Sponsor!

Are you interested in strengthening the development of sustainable agriculture in Minnesota? Supporting the SFA’s quarterly newsletter is a way for you, your business or organization to become active in the cause. We will acknowledge your sponsorship in CornerPost by providing description and contact information unless you prefer that your sponsorship remain anonymous - we will honor your wishes. Please call Anne Borgendale at (320) 226-6318 to discuss your sponsorship opportunities.
MAKE PLANS NOW to attend an amazing conference for advanced, commercial-scale organic/sustainable farming & grazing. Learn from some of the top farmers, scientists & consultants.

3 DAYS — JUST $175!

DETAILS & REGISTRATION: www.acresusa.com or call 1-800-355-5313

NUTRIENT-DENSE FOODS FROM YOUR MARKET GARDEN & GREENHOUSE

Practical instruction on growing & profiting from high-brix, optimum-quality produce from your market garden & greenhouse.

Instructors: Jon Frank & special guests

HEALTH FROM THE GUT UP

Wed., Dec. 2
Accomplishing deep healing of your body starting with the digestive system — the overlooked cause and cure for most sickness.

Instructor: Jerry Brunetti — $150

Intensive pre-conference courses by pre-registration only; space limited.
See www.acresusa.com for further details

P.O. Box 91299 / Austin, Texas 78709 U.S.A. / (512) 892-4400
fax (512) 892-4448 / e-mail: info@acresusa.com
Dear SFA Members and Friends of SFA,

The fundraising drive for 2008/2009 has concluded with a total of $10,703 contributed by 115 donors. This result is very encouraging and represents a 60% increase in the amount collected in our first fundraising drive held last year. We are also very pleased that the number of donors nearly doubled.

It is especially encouraging to see this increase in contributions and donors in a year when we saw a major slump in our economy. It is a big vote of confidence for our organization to see an increase in support through donations when it is very much needed due to the reduced support available from other sources and when we would expect to see a decrease in donations due to a shrinking economy.

Bringing farmers and their supporters together to improve agriculture has been a central part of the work of SFA. Support such as that which was provided by the donors to the 2008/2009 fundraising drive will help assure that this work will continue. As we approach the start of the third fundraising drive, we hope you will add your support to this drive and we acknowledge the generous gifts given in 2008/2009 by the donors listed below.

Gratefully Yours,
Jim Tjepkema, SFA Fundraising Committee Chair

Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota
Sustaining Fund

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota thanks these contributors:

Barbara & Stephen Adams, MeadowWild Farm
L. M. Arntsen
Dwight & Becky Ault, Ault Farm
Joseph Ault
Bruce Bacon, Crandall Garden Farme
Chris Barnier
Rebecca Baumann, The Minnesota Project
Tommy Bonner
George Boody, Land Stewardship Project
Diane Borgendale
Joe and Toni Borgerding
Chris Brazelton
Mabel Brelje
Phillip Brooks, H. Brooks &Co., LLC
Milo Buehler
Curtis Bush, Blueberry Bush’s
Todd Churchill, Thousand Hills Cattle Company
Paul Conklin, Northern Light Farm
Bob & Joann Cramer, Cramer Organics
Veron Dahlhiemer
Erin Dewitt
Jamie DeRosier
Kimberley Devine-Johnson

Martin & Atina Diffley, Organic FarmingWorks, LLC
Lowell & Audrey Dittberner
John Donnay
Beth Dooley
Mary Dragich
Rodney Dybing, Midwest Bio-Ag of MN
Tom Ehrhardt, Albert Lea Seed House
David Engel, Natures International Certification Service
David Evert, Stimulating Economic Progress
Katie Felland, O-WataFarm
Carmen Fernholz
Debra Filipovich, Berries Etc.
Kelly Firkins, DelaBlu Farms
Mary Jo Forbord
Gerald W. Ford
Mary Ellen Frame
Dan & Julie Gieger
Tim Gieseke, Ag Resource Strategies
Dan & Gilda Gieske
Good Earth Food Coop
Joe & Michelle Gransee-Bowman
David Gray

Donors continued on page 26
Vic Ormsby continued from page 14

Resource Center.

Vic will be remembered as a visionary; a loyal friend; a dedicated family man; an excellent cook, bread baker, and wine maker; a passionate advocate for soil and water conservation; a lover of good food; and a person who lived his life true to his values.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations in Vic’s memory go to the Southeast MN chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association; Land Stewardship Project; or Winona Health Hospice.
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<th>Sustaining Contribution:</th>
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| SFA Annual Membership (for a family) | $30 |
| SFA Annual Youth/Student Membership (for one student) | $10 |

(Not Tax Deductible)

Name 1: First Last
Name 2: First Last

Farm/Business/Organization:
Address:
Address Line 2:
City: State: Zip:
Country:

Home Phone: Work Phone:
Mobile Phone:
Email:
Website:

Chapter:
- Central
- Cannon River/Hiawatha Valley
- Lake Superior
- South Central
- Western
- Coteau Ridge
- Lake Agassiz
- Southeast
- Unspecified

Would you like to receive SFA's biweekly Events Email? Yes No

Please make your check payable to: SFA of MN. Mail form & check to:
SFA of MN, 7356 Cable Rd, Little Falls, MN 56345-5433

Thank you!

Member Interests (Optional):
- Chef/Cooking
- Consumer
- Crafts
- Distribution
- Education
- Energy Production
- Entrepreneur
- Environment
- Events
- Exhibitor
- Farmer
- Food Production
- Garlic Festival
- Grazefest
- Health
- Marketing
- Other
- Policy
- Processing
- Sponsor
- Youth
**Fall Events Calendar**

Oct 2-4  **Upper Minnesota River Valley Arts Meander.** This event has more than 33 individual studios in and near the Western Minnesota Communities of Ortonville, Appleton, Madison, Milan, Dawson, Montevideo and Granite Falls. Call for the free brochure that includes driving directions to all studios. More info -- call us at 1.866.866.5432 or visit www.artsmeander.com.

Oct 3  **Solar Farm Tour at Snowy Pines.** Please call either Greg Nolan (320 333-4056) or Sue Peterson (320 355-2980 or email azariahsue@yahoo.com) for directions and more details.

Oct 8  **Green Business is Good Business Tour – Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) – Baxter, MN.** If you would like to be on the BAELN email list or for general information on BAELN, please contact Stephen Mikkelson at (218) 316-3887, or toll free at 1-800-657-3864.

Oct 10-13  **Community Food Security Coalition Conference – Des Moines, IA.** For more info visit http://communityfoodconference.org/13/.

Oct 16  **Crow River Chapter of SFA Fall Social at Deer Lake Orchard – Buffalo, MN.** RSVP and Info: Jerry Ford jerry@marienne.com (320) 543-3394.

Oct 17-24  **Permaculture Design Certification Course Focused on Rural and Suburban Sites – Nature’s Nest Farm, Montrose, MN.** For more information call Cathy Rose at Nature’s Nest Farm at (763) 972-6891 or visit the website at: http://www.naturesnestfarm.com/index_permaculture.htm.

Oct 18  **Cannon River/Hiawatha Chapter Farm Tour & Potluck – Clinton Falls Farm, Medford, MN.** The featured topics will be market garden & greenhouse. For further information contact Kathy Zeman at (507) 664-9446 or kzeman@kmwb.net.

Oct 24  **100 Orchards Harvest Workshop – HUG campus in Pine River, MN.** Please contact Sue Peterson (320 355-2980 or email azariahsue@yahoo.com) for more information.

Oct 30 – Nov 1  **Growing Food & Justice for All Initiative Second Annual Gathering – Milwaukee, WI.** For more information visit: www.growingpower.org.

Nov 7  **4th Annual Earth Conference: “Crisis as Opportunity: Redesigning the Good Life” – School sister of Notre Dame, Mankato, MN.** For more information contact Lisa Coons at lcoons@ssndmankato.org or 507-389-4272.

Nov 12  **St. Croix River Valley Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapter Grower-Buyer Workshop – Stillwater, MN.** For more information contact the Land Stewardship Project’s Dana Jackson at danaj@landstewardshipproject.org or 612-722-6377.

Nov 13-15  **The Women in Food and Agriculture Network’s 10th Annual Tri-State Fall Harvest Gathering – Cedar Valley Resort, Lanesboro, MN.** For details email info@wfan.org or call 515-460-247

Nov 14  **2009 Superior Grown Food Summit – University of Minnesota, Duluth.** For more information visit www.lssfa.org or email foodsummit@silvercreekinstitute.org.

Nov 19  **Legislative Panel on Green Jobs – Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) – Baxter, MN.** If you would like to be on the BAELN email list or for general information on BAELN, please contact Stephen Mikkelson at (218) 316-3887, or toll free at 1-800-657-3864.

Dec 1-2  **Nutrient-Dense Foods from your Market Garden & Greenhouse – Crown Plaza Hotel Riverfront, St. Paul, MN.** For more information see: www.acresusa.com/events/09conf/preconf.htm

Dec 17  **Green Jobs in Minnesota: What does it mean for my community? – Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) – Baxter, MN.** If you would like to be on the BAELN email list or for general information on BAELN, please contact Stephen Mikkelson at (218) 316-3887, or toll free at 1-800-657-3864.
**Grazefest Minnesota 2009 in Pictures**

In the summer of 2009 Grazefest Minnesota went to Carlton County. Three farms played host to the day’s activities: Troy and Chris Salzer’s Sandy Hill’s Ranch, Peter and Carol Jelinek’s Fleece Force Flocks, and the Hedquist Family’s Green Pastures Dairy. Their farms range from a custom beef breeding and grazing operation to a farm that rotationally grazes crossbred and purebred ewes and nubian goats to a grass-based dairy with multi-species grazing that produces farmstead, artisan cheese. These families graciously opened up their farms and shared their accumulated wisdom to aid the learning of all. Greg Judy, grazier, featured writer in The Stockman Grass Farmer and author of *No Risk Ranching—Custom Grazing on Leased Land* and *Comback Farms—Rejuvenating Soils, Pastures & Profits with Livestock Grazing Management*, was the keynote speaker. He was a hit and shared information on Holistic High Density Grazing and more.

(More Grazefest pictures on page 30)
Troy Salzer started out the morning addressing a wide mix of Grazefest attendees.

(on the left) Will Hedquist talked about how he manages his dairy herd. (on the right) Jan Judy, wife and farming partner of Greg Judy.

Curious cows at Green Pastures Dairy.

Minnesota Organic Certification Cost Share Now Available

Certified organic farmers and handlers are eligible for rebates of up to $750

Apply by October 15, 2009

You will need:
1) Application form
   www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic
   or call 651-201-6012
2) Detailed billing statement(s) from your certifier
3) Copy of a certificate issued/renewed after October 1, 2008**

**NOTE: If your inspection/review is in process and you have not received your 2009 certificate, call Meg at 651-201-6616.

Do you receive SFA’s bi-weekly Events Email?

No, then you are missing out on the what, when and where of the sustainable farming world. Sign up today to stay informed. Don’t miss out on any great events! To subscribe: email Anne at communications@sfa-mn.org with “Subscribe to biweekly email” in the subject line.
Meet Nicole Wilde

I have long been a supporter of sustainable agriculture. While living in Ashland, WI, I was a CSA share owner, and had my own small sustainable veggie garden. While in graduate school in Milwaukee, I wrote a business plan to support the expansion of sustainable agriculture in the northeast Minnesota / northwestern Wisconsin region via a small chain of local fast food restaurants that served only local grown/produced goods. I know it wasn’t slow food, but the idea was to help get the masses used to adopting local foods and healthier menu items via a channel that there were accustomed to. Also in grad school I volunteered at Michael Fields Agriculture Institute.

Growing up in the farm country of southern Wisconsin I had some exposure to farming. My girlfriends were all from farming families – some dairy, some meat, some larger scale corn growers. My mom was also a verdant gardener and I worked with her on our family vegetable plot.

I currently live in Duluth, but my partner, Joe Thorne, and I are building a green home north of Two Harbors and clearing land for some home farming use. We are also planning a root cellar, small orchard and green house as part of our long-term plan. In January I am traveling to Penn State to take a course on making artisan ice cream. It’s the same course Ben and Jerry took, and I am seriously considering starting a local organic ice cream business that uses local ingredients. All of the ice cream we currently purchase is made far away OR has high fructose corn syrup among the laundry list of ingredients.

I work for myself as a consultant at this time. My past work has been predominantly in the non-profit world. I have served as both a Peace Corps and Americorps volunteer, worked for Northland College, Big Top Chautauqua and now offer services to non-profits with social and environmental missions.

Livingston’s Paragon

At the farmers’ market there is a girl in the booth next to mine selling hydroponic tomatoes. I scoff at her wooden crates from behind a basket of greens. I eat salad all of June because our bodies are already swimming in sixty percent water and I need more islands to stand on. Tomatoes with roots in the dirt tested under my clumsy hand harboring secret inhibitions within wire cages, the would be run away tangle coaxed into straighter lines. Those hands reach out offering bright rolling fruit finally forgiving that manipulation only in August. In June I sell greens eat salad and wait.

By Richelle Caya
SF A’s Youth Sustainability Wrinting Competition, College Division - Poetry Entry
mission: we support the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education and farmer-to-farmer networking.